

SS, Marriage, M&F, Wives' Responsibilities

4/16/23

I. EVERY CHRISTIAN IS WIFE, CHILD, & SERVANT

In Ephesians 5:22 – 6:9, wives, children, and bondservants are commanded to submit to those that the Lord has placed in authority over them. In the larger context of the book, however, and in the larger context of Scripture as a whole, EVERY follower of Christ, including husbands, parents, and masters, are: 1) Wife; 2) Child; and 3) Servant.

Discussion Question: Explain what is meant by that last statement and seek to demonstrate it from the text of Ephesians.

A: 1) Every believer is a part of and thus the WIFE of Christ, the Ultimate Husband.

Eph. 5:27 ...so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Eph. 5:31-32 "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." ³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

A: 2) Every believer is the CHILD of God the Father.

Eph. 1:5 ...he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

Eph. 5:1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.

A: 3) Every believer is the SERVANT of the Lord.

*Eph. 6:5-6, 9 Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, ⁶ not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, **but as bondservants of Christ**, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷ ... ⁹ Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that **he who is both their Master and yours** is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.*

Application Q: How should the Christian's identity as Wife, Child, and Servant impact husbands? Wives?

A: 1) **Husbands** should exercise authority in the home as those profoundly aware that they themselves are under authority. They answer to their Celestial Husband, their heavenly Father, and their Master. Their authority is ministerial, i.e. it has been entrusted to them so that they can SERVE. They serve not only those under them, but also the Triune God above them. 2) **Wives** should submit to their husband's authority, profoundly aware that their deeper submission is to their Celestial Husband, their heavenly Father, and their Master. No earthly husband is perfectly trustworthy. But the Celestial Husband is ALWAYS worthy of the wife's trust. He ALWAYS leads wisely, kindly, and effectually. When things are hard, whatever the husband's part may be, it is always SECONDARY. God is ALWAYS the PRIMARY Leader in whatever has been ordained.

II. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, THE EMPHASIZED DUTY OF WIVES IS SUBMISSION

Eph. 5:22-24 *Wives, **submit to your own husbands**, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, **so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.***

Col. 3:18 *Wives, **submit to your husbands**, as is fitting in the Lord.*

Titus 2:3-5 *Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, ⁴ and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, ⁵ to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, **and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.***

1Pe 3:1-6 *Likewise, wives, **be subject to your own husbands**, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, ² **when they see your respectful and pure conduct.** ³ Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— ⁴ but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. ⁵ For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, **by submitting to their own husbands,** ⁶ **as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.** And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.*

III. 1PETER DRAWS ATTENTION TO SUBMISSION IN A HARD SETTING

1Pe 3:1 *LIKEWISE, wives...*

1Pe 2:13-25 *Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme,¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.¹⁶ Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.¹⁷ Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.*

¹⁸ *Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.¹⁹ For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.²⁰ For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.²⁵ For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

Discussion Q: What was life generally like for followers of Christ under the Roman emperors, and for Christian slaves in relation to their masters?

A: HARD. Persecution was recurring and at times very intense. Slavery is never easy. In most situations, there is a harsh element.

Discussion Q: How does the Holy Spirit motivate servants under unjust authority in vs. 18-25?

- 1) Continuing to show respect and submission toward God-given authority, even when that authority is exercised unjustly, reflects and displays the grace of God. *"This is a*

gracious thing” (vs. 19, 20, 2x). It’s his grace that produces such submission. Believers can thus exhibit that grace.

- 2) Such submission can shine when one is “mindful of God” (19). God is “the Audience of One”. He sees. He knows. What he thinks, says, and does is what really matters. “*This is a gracious thing IN THE SIGHT OF GOD*” (v20).
- 3) V20 suggests that Christ’s people are “credited”, i.e. viewed as worthy of reward when they “do good and (yet) suffer”.
- 4) Christians have been “CALLED” (v21) to submit in difficult situations, because this was the Calvary Road that Christ himself walked. We are called to follow in his steps.
- 5) Those suffering unjustly find help and strength in “entrusting themselves to him who judges justly” (v23).
- 6) Christ suffered unjustly so that his people might be set free to live righteously (which includes submission to God-given authority) [v24].
- 7) Christ’s unjust suffering has brought healing and restoration to God (vs. 24c, 25). The fall into sin involved a radical inversion of the order of authority that God had established. Adam placed God “under” him, yielding to Eve, who yielded to Satan. Salvation RESTORES the proper order. God is over all. A husband (or master) is under God. A wife (or servant) is under God’s delegated authority. Satan is resisted, not followed.

IV. 1 PETER 3:1-6

3 Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they see your respectful and pure conduct. 3 Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— 4 but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious. 5 For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

1. What’s the first motive for wifely submission mentioned by Peter?

“So that...they may be won without a word.” What are the more common ways that wives use in hopes of changing their husbands? Complaining; nagging; becoming irritated; withdrawing; taking charge themselves. The Bible urges, instead, that wives seek to “win” their husbands to a better way by acting reverently, contentedly, and submissively.

2. Why is the call to adorn *“the hidden person of the heart”* contrasted with a warning against focusing on external adornment?

We all have a tendency to focus on the outward more than the inward. What we think that other people think tends to carry more weight than what God thinks. The Lord is not indifferent to our appearance but is FAR MORE concerned with the state and activity of our hearts. The Christian’s first concern is with her or his HEART. *“Above all, guard your heart, for out of it flow the issues of life” (Prov. 4:23)*. We most need God’s help with our underlying motives, desires, fears, and thoughts. A wife is to labor at *“adorning the hidden person of the heart”*.

3. Describe *“a gentle and quiet spirit”* in terms of what it’s like and in terms of what it’s NOT like. How does this differ from a personality trait?

- 1) GENTLE is a fruit of the Spirit, found in close conjunction with *“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control”*. Its opposite is that which is abrasive, harsh, and unkind. A woman can be confident and even somewhat assertive and still be “gentle”.

- 2) QUIET is the opposite of making a great deal of noise. It is the absence of agitation and turbulence, as in a quiet stream. A woman can be a strong extrovert, very outgoing, and yet have a contented spirit and a willingness to yield to God-given authority.

4. Why is *“a gentle and quiet spirit VERY PRECIOUS in God’s sight”*?

As is noted in the latter half of the preceding chapter, such a submissive attitude is *“a gracious thing”* in the sight of heaven. It is the work of grace. It is Christ-like. It is redemptive. It draws attention to God who judges justly and can be trusted at all times. It’s more concerned with God’s glory than with personal relief.

5. Verse 6 says, *Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.* How does the call to wifely submission relate to the temptation to be sinfully afraid?

Submission to fallible human authority can only thrive where trust in God is strong. Distrust prompts us to take matters into our own hands. In the Garden, Satan was able to seduce Eve into distrusting the Lord. She became afraid of missing out on something she felt she really needed.

V. **EPHESIANS 5:22-24**

Eph. 5:22-24 *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.*

1. The summons is to wives, not to husbands re their wives.
2. Wives are to submit to “THEIR OWN” husbands, not to men in general.
3. Wives are commanded to submit, AS TO THE LORD.
4. Her submission is rooted in the God-given headship of her husband, a headship that reflects Christ’s headship. The husband is under Christ, and Christ himself is under God (1Co 11).
5. Wives should submit IN EVERYTHING.
6. A wife’s submission involves the attitude of RESPECTING her husband.

However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

CONCLUSION:

1. Identify an exemplary biblical example of womanly submission. How does the woman exemplify submission? RUTH
2. What stands out to you about Christ’s submission? His pleasure in (save in Gethsemane and Calvary) and determination to do his Father’s will.
3. For the Christian wife, what are some of the blessings of submission? It’s a relief to not bear primary responsibility. Leadership brings burdens. It’s a SAFE place.

